

PRESS RELEASE



The Cleveland Museum of Art

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SPECIAL EXHIBITION OF PHOTOGRAPHS BY HENRI CARTIER-BRESSON OPENS AT THE CLEVELAND MUSEUM OF ART IN DECEMBER

Henri Cartier-Bresson: Photographer, the fifty-year retrospective exhibition of 155 black and white photographs by the French master of "the decisive moment" in photography, opens at The Cleveland Museum of Art on Wednesday, December 16, 1981, and remains at the Museum through Sunday, January 24, 1982. Cartier-Bresson selected the 155 photographs he believes to be the most significant from among the thousands of images he has made. Cornell Capa, executive director of the International Center of Photography in New York, and his staff, organized this personal retrospective, marking the Center's fifth anniversary.

The photographs in the exhibition were taken in 23 countries. People are present in almost all of the images. They seldom notice that they are being noticed by Cartier-Bresson. He records them alone or in small groups or crowds, under stress and at leisure. He has captured every emotion--from quiet contemplation to deep sorrow, from buoyant happiness to reverent awe.

Henri Cartier-Bresson was born in France in 1908. In his teens he began studying painting, being especially drawn to the Surrealists, and began photography in earnest in 1932. His first photographs were exhibited at the Julien Levy Gallery, New York. Since then he has traveled the world, alone or with filmmakers and fellow photographers, capturing "decisive moments" in people's lives--children at play, men and women in love, liberated prisoners and defeated soldiers, Chinese revolutionaries, refugees during the partition of India and Pakistan.

Cartier-Bresson made famous the phrase "the decisive moment," which he used as the title of his most important book. The term is shorthand for his approach: to use the camera to rescue extraordinary fragments of experience from the swift current

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of life and time. "To me," he has said, "photography is the simultaneous recognition, in a fraction of a second, of the significance of an event as well as of the precise organization of forms which give that event its proper expression."

He has received numerous awards for his photographic work including four Overseas Press Club awards. Now 73, Cartier-Bresson concentrates on drawing, occasionally photographs, and is engaged in editing the photographs he has taken over fifty years.

A 336-page catalog with a photograph of each image in the exhibition has been published by Robert Delpire for the International Center of Photography. It includes an introductory essay by the French poet, Yves Bonnefoy. During the exhibition a limited number of catalogs will be available at the Museum Sales Desk for \$25.00.

Henri Cartier-Bresson: Photographer has been made possible with the support of the American Express Foundation. Chairman and Chief Executive Officer of American Express Company, James D. Robinson III, notes that American Express is pleased to be underwriting one of the most important photography exhibitions of the decade. "The Cartier-Bresson exhibition continues our ongoing commitment to support the arts and to broaden cultural perspectives worldwide," said Mr. Robinson.

The exhibition opened at the International Center of Photography, New York, in November of 1979, and has appeared in eleven North American cities. From Cleveland it travels to the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston (February-April 1982), the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art (April-June 1982), and the William Rockhill Nelson Gallery and Atkins Museum of Fine Arts in Kansas City (July-August 1982).

Daily gallery talks in the exhibition will be given by instructors from the Museum's art history and education department from Wednesday, December 16, through Tuesday, December 22, at 1:30 pm, with the exception of Monday, December 21, when the Museum is closed. These talks are free and open to all.

Sheila Webb, instructor in the Museum's art history and education department, has organized Mirror with a Memory, an exhibition of photographs by Clarence White

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given to the Museum in 1980 and shown for the first time as a group. This educational exhibition has been assembled to complement the Cartier-Bresson exhibition.

November and December films in the Museum's series on art and artists concentrate on Cartier-Bresson and other photographers. Each program lasts one half hour or less and is shown at 12:30 and 7:00 pm on Wednesdays. In addition, two brief slide-tape presentations, History of Photography and The Decisive Moment: Henri Cartier-Bresson, will run continuously in the Museum's audio-visual center during the first week of the exhibition. (Wednesday, December 16 through Tuesday, December 22 from 11:30 am to 4 pm daily and from 1 pm to 5 pm on Sunday.)

Ms. Webb's lecture series, The History of Photography: Technique and Artistry, will complement the two photography exhibitions. The series, which is open to the public, has been scheduled at 2:15 on three successive Wednesdays--December 2, 9, and 16--to examine artistic and technical developments in photography from 1830 to 1980. She will also offer, on Saturday mornings at 9:45 am, beginning February 27, 1982, a ten-part lecture series covering the history and technique of photography.

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For additional information or photographs, please contact the Public Relations Office, The Cleveland Museum of Art, 11150 East Boulevard, Cleveland, Ohio 44106; 216/421-7340.